



Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

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MEMORANDUM

To: Members, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
Through: Diane Barrans, Executive Director
From: Kerry Thomas, Internal Auditor
Date: December 23, 2014
Subject: Internal Auditor/ANSWERS Update

My role as ANSWERS Project Manager continues to consume the majority of my time while minimal internal audit and strategic planning efforts are ongoing. This allocation of time will continue through the SLDS grant project period ending mid-2015.

ANSWERS Project Updates

As you know from having received a related link by email, key ANSWERS stakeholders are currently being surveyed to inform the selection and format of initial ANSWERS reports and information products. The project's data reporting subcommittee will review survey responses and use this information to ensure ANSWERS products are high-value and accessible to a variety of stakeholder groups. The survey results will also inform future enhancements and priorities addressed post-implementation.

GeoNorth, an Anchorage-based firm, continues ANSWERS system design, development and documentation, scheduled for completion March 2015. A development milestone was reached when user acceptance testing on file upload, matching and data validation began in December 2014. Additional functionalities and full system testing will occur over the upcoming quarter.

Two new ACPE staff members joined the ANSWERS team during the last quarter: Jade Bickmore and Alexis Grundmann, both Project Analysts. The additional project analysis and support from these new team members are beneficial to the overall project and current efforts.

Sustainability planning is ongoing for ANSWERS post-grant operations. Recruitments are underway to hire permanent staff for the ANSWERS Director and Programmer/Data Analyst

positions, with additional recruitments for a Research Manager and Database Architect planned for early spring 2015.

ACPE Management Initiatives

Over the past quarter I have continued working with ACPE's other Senior Managers to implement a Lean process improvement framework with current focus areas on understanding the Lean principles and staff training to increase related expertise in the organization. I have also worked with this group to formalize agency succession planning with a primary goal of aligning training and staff development efforts to staff aspirations and upcoming transitions.

I look forward to our discussion and interaction at the January meeting. I will be participating in the meeting telephonically from ACPE's Juneau office.